allocation of Rs. 502.90 crores. This is outside the Centrally Sponsored Scheme and is an Upgradation and Special Problem Grant given by the 11th Finance Commission.

(c) As per information available with the Department of Justice, as on 31st March, 2005, so far the Fast Track Courts have disposed of 6.87 lakh cases.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. In fact, the Department of Justice had requested the 12th Finance Commission to recommend the continuation of existing Fast Track Courts and creation of another 1500 new Fast Track Courts at the Magisterial Level. However, the 12th Finance Commission has not made any recommendations in this regard.

(f) The Government have been constantly reviewing the accumulation of arrears in courts. Besides increasing the Judge strength from time to time, various steps have been taken by the courts, *viz.,* grouping of cases involving common questions of law, constitution of specialized benches and organizing Lok Adalats at regular intervals, etc.

The Government has also encouraged alternative modes of disposal including mediation, negotiation and arbitration. Special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunal, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, Family Courts, Labour Courts, Consumber Courts, etc. have been set up to expedite disposal of cases Information Technology is being used in generation of cause lists, providing information to the litigants and advocates for speedy disposal of cases.

Judge-Population ratio

2719. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that India's Judge-Population ratio is the lowest in the world;

(b) whether it is also a fact that backlog of pending cases is on the rise; and

(c) if so, the steps proposed to clear the pending cases and make the judiciary more effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) to (c) The present judge strength in India is 13 per million population (approx.). The 120th report of Eleventh Law Commission on "Manpower Planning in Judiciary - A Blue Print" (July, 1987), has, *inter-alia* observed that the judge strength in UK, Australia and US per million population is as follows:

U.K.	:	50.9
Australia	:	41.6
US	:	107.0

The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its judgement of 21st March, 2002, in All India Judges' Association & Ors *Vs.* Union of India & Ors, had directed that an increase in the Judge strength from the existing 10.5 or 13 per 10 lakh people to 50 judges per 10 lakh people should be effected and implemented within a period of five years in a phased manner to be determined and directed by the Union Ministry of Law. The Court, had also directed that the existing vacancies in the Subordinate Courts at all levels should be filled.

The Central Government have filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court praying that the increase in Judge strength in the Union Territories for which the Central Government is administratively responsible be allowed based on workload and pendency of cases. The matter is *sub-judice*.

The backlog of pending cases is decreasing in the Supreme Court of India, however, the pendency is on the rise in the High Courts and the subordinate courts.

With regard to steps taken by judiciary to expedite disposal of cases, the Government is periodically monitoring the pendency position in various courts. The steps taken for speedy disposal of pending cases include timely filling the vacancies of judges, increasing the judge strength, grouping of cases involving common question of law, constitution of specialized benches, organizing Lok Adalats at regular intervals, encouraging alternative modes of disputes resolution like negotiation, mediation and arbitration and setting up of special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunals, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, Family Courts, Labour Courts etc.